

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes

December 15, 2015

Members present: Ray Guenter, Robert Kennedy, Connie Melo, Ellen Phillips, Donna Sterling and Philip Walker
Council Liaison: Shari Cantor
Members Absent: Noreen Batchelder, Linda Hanson, Ruth Kurien
Staff present: Kathleen Faroni, Gina Marino, Armena Walsh
Guests: Jim Doran, Kevin Farmer
Volunteer Secretary: Amy Lynn Silverman

Chairman Philip Walker called the meeting to order at 10:30AM.

The Minutes of November 17, 2015 were approved unanimously.

Old Business

Ellen Phillips shared her draft letter to the Town Council which she had reviewed with Helen Rubino-Turco. Ellen noted that while Helen Rubino-Turco is supportive of the letter, she cautions that there are many priorities. Philip Walker had revised the draft. It was approved unanimously that the letter will be tweaked and submitted to the Council.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Walker reported that the Senior Job Bank is looking for a new manager because of Bill Stachelek's resignation. Mayor Scott Slifka will be coming to the January meeting. Phil has invited all of the Council members to join the Commission that day. The meeting will start at 10:00am. He has invited Senator Beth Bye to return and asked her to pick the best time. Noreen Batchelder has invited Mr. Garland Tanksley of CRT's Senior Food Services for the February meeting. The Police Chief Tracey Gove would like to come to a future meeting.

Phil is working on the Commission's Annual Report. He will share the draft with the members.

Senior Job Bank

Jim Doran gave a year end review: this was the 36th year of operation. Volunteers contributed an estimated 5,000 hours of office services; there is a list of 450 service providers; 1500 work projects are estimated to have been provided; seven towns are served with West Hartford being 70-75% of the numbers served. There are new Board members. Jim Doran will be chairing the fundraising committee in 2016; Al Nweeia will be chairing the communications committee. Bob Cave is overseeing the day-to-day work of the SJB.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer reported that 200-300 annual appeal letters are being mailed. There will be a Jan. 5th event at ShopRite to recruit volunteers. The Board hopes to grow in 2016.

Human Services

Armena Walsh spoke about the new computer system that will help the department better track the clients and services provided and provide more comprehensive reporting. Phil asked that some of the reports on gaps, trends and changes in demographics be shared with the Commission. Holiday programs include the provision of gift cards by a pharmacy for those in need. St. Peter Claver has again provided food baskets. With the better weather so far, Energy Assistance may stretch further. Ed Sanady is the department's interim manager.

Town Council

Shari Cantor spoke about the recent “people of interest” at Emanuel Synagogue and Blue Back Square. There are concerns about racial profiling but also concerns when “things” are out of place. There is talk about what the town can do to have discussions with other communities to build bridges. The UConn property is under discussion by the Council. People with ideas may email them to Essie Labrot. There is a hearing at Planning and Zoning about the St. Joseph property proposals.

Other Business

Donna Sterling spoke about the Senator Chris Murphy’s recent Pancakes and Politics Breakfast. Senator Murphy recognized many students for various achievements and shared updates about his work in DC. Lee Reynolds is his local staff person and could be asked to participate in a future Commission meeting.

Senior Centers

Written reports are attached to these Minutes.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 10:00am.

The meeting adjourned at Noon.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Lynn Silverman
Volunteer Secretary